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MISSILE LAG LAID TO SYMINGTON

Record As Air Force Secretary Cited By GOP

By HOWARD NORTON

[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, Feb. 10—The GOP today branded Senator Symington, the Missouri Democratic Presidential aspirant, as the "architect of the lost years" of missile development.

And Symington counterattacked with a charge that the Republicans are "distorting the history of the 1940's."

Symington was Secretary of the Air Force in the latter half of the 1940's, at a time when missile research was all but abandoned.

For sometime he has been leading the Democratic party's assault on the Administration for its alleged failure to do enough or spend enough to insure the nation's safety.

Desperation Seen

This assault was labeled by the Republican National Committee today as "a horrifying example of how desperate he and other Senate Democrats are becoming in their frustrated effort to develop a 1960 issue against the Republican Administration."

The GOP committee released figures showing that in the five years during which Symington was a civilian official at the Pentagon, the Air Force spending on missile development totaled only \$1,155,000,000.

It points out that these were the years when the Russians were busy acquiring their big head start in the rocket field, 1947-1951.

The committee notes that, in contrast with the Democratic record of the late forties, the Republican Administration, in the

eight years including 1960 have spent, or will spend, a total of \$29,047,000,000 on missiles and missile research.

Invited Examination

"Symington has selected military matters as the core of his floundering campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination," says the Republican statement.

"He thus invited examination of his personal record of accomplishment in this field—in the years in which he was Secretary of the Air Force, or Assistant Secretary of War for Air in the Truman Administration.

"In the years that he served as the Truman Administration's civilian air expert," the GOP declares, "Symington presided over the 'lost years' in United States missile development.

"One Possible Indication"

"An examination of those years," the statement adds, "... gives one possible indication why Symington is reluctant to enter Presidential primaries and thereby open up that record for public examination by his Senate rivals."

The Republicans also accuse Symington of threatening to disclose "top-secret Central Intelligence Agency estimates of U.S.S.R. missile strength" given to him in closed Senate hearings.

Demonstrates "Disdain"

And they declare that the Democratic leadership should see to it that he gets no such information, if he is going to treat it "with such disdain."

Symington demonstrated his "disdain" in his reply to the GOP blast.

"Distorting the history of the 1940's," he snapped, "will not close the missile gap of the 1960's, nor strengthen our position at the coming summit conference."

Digging into the newspaper files, the GOP gleefully quotes the words of two of Symington's Senate colleagues to back up its charge that the Missouri Senator is the man to blame for the missile lag.

It quotes Senator Johnson (D., Texas) as stating on July 12, 1950, three months after Symington left the Pentagon, that "during this same period, from 1948 to the present, the Air Force, supposedly our first line of defense, has steadily decreased in size and effectiveness."